

NATURAL NEWS



The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

WEEKLY STAFF NEWSLETTER
December 19, 1997

HOLIDAY TIME SHEET NOTICE

Attention all staff:

Since the New Year Holiday falls in the middle of the week, we **must** have your time sheets on Wednesday, December 24, 1997! If you plan to be away during the holidays, please leave your time sheet with a responsible individual from your department or bring it to the Human Resources/Payroll office before you leave to insure you will be paid. It is extremely important that you follow through or **you may not get paid!** The time sheet we are referring to is for the pay period ending December 26, 1997. If you have any questions, please call **Doris** or **Maria** (x220 or x289).

In the spirit of the holiday season ...

The money collected from the **Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou** exhibit's altars has been donated to The Haitian American Community Association, a local non-profit agency that serves as an advocate for the Haitian population in Chicagoland. Over \$800 was collected over the course of the exhibit's run here at the Field.

Submitted by **Mia Shillace**

CHANGES IN NSF'S PEER REVIEW SYSTEM

Since October 1997 reviewers in the National Science Foundation's (NSF) peer review system have received a new set of criteria upon which to base their funding decisions. The old criteria directed reviewers to consider:

- 1) research performer competence;
- 2) intrinsic merit of the research;
- 3) utility or relevance of the research; and
- 4) effect on the infrastructure of science and engineering.

The new criteria simply ask:

- 1) what is the intellectual merit and quality of the proposed activity? and
- 2) what are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

NSF officials believe these criteria are clearer and provide program directors and reviewers with the ability to fund a greater number of younger researchers as well as two areas NSF emphasizes in its strategic plan: the integration of research and education, and interdisciplinary research. Please contact Sponsored Programs Coordinator **Sophie Twichell** (x877) with questions.

NOON BALLOON

The Noon Balloon presentation for Tuesday, December 16, 1997 was delivered by **Harold Voris**, Curator and Head, Division of Reptiles and Amphibians, Department of Zoology, Field Museum. Harold summarized recent research on the ecology of aquatic snakes in the Old World tropics. He focused on the aquatic snakes from the canals and marshy area around Lake Sengkhal, in the southeastern region of Thailand. Specimens were collected using modified fish traps as well as hand collecting. Telemetry equipment was implanted under the skin of each snake before release to obtain data on movement to develop estimates of home range area, as well as basic behavioral data. Environmental conditions were also monitored and correlated with snake behavior. The most abundant aquatic snake at this site, *Enhydryis enhydryis*, a homalopsine colubrid, was found to have a large home range involving several hundred square meters, while *E. plumbea* showed very little movement in the canals. Snake body temperature varied slightly from 30° C, despite daily temperature fluctuations of 35° C near mid-day and 25° C at night. Although moisture is abundant, the relative humidity at the marsh surface fell to about 50% during mid-day. Harold suggested evaporative cooling at lower humidities would permit the snakes to maintain a constant body temperature during the day. In a broader context, Harold noted that among reptiles, snakes are the only group having fully aquatic species, and the aquatic habitat has evolved independently within snakes at least four times. Although the larger issue of how snakes have so successfully made the transition from terrestrial to aquatic existence remains unanswered, their ability to maintain a relatively uniform and high body temperature has emerged as intriguing element.

The Noon Balloon Series will be suspended for the remainder of 1997. The next presentation will be Tuesday, January 6, 1998 at noon in the Zoology Classroom.

HOUSEKEEPING HELP

If you have an urgent request for the Housekeeping Team, please try to reach the Housekeeping Supervisor on the radio. Our call sign is 301 on channel 2. If you do not have a radio or can not raise us on the radio ask the Field Base on the radio or extension 322 to forward the message to us. This avoids a long delay in responding to messages that are left on the voice mail system. Of course we will always respond as quickly as possible to a voice mail but sometimes it takes a while to get back to the office and check. Thanks for your help. -- The Housekeeping Team

Veronica Alexander & The Alexander Family would like to thank each of you for your cards and kindness shown during the passing of our loved one. God bless each of you.

Next Natural News -- January 9, 1998

The *Natural News* will not be published again until Friday, January 9, 1998, unless there are urgent, time-valued announcements. If you have any such urgent, time-valued announcements, contact Carolyn Klyce (x642) before noon on Tuesday, December 23. From December 24-January 2, 1998, contact Human Resources (x356).

NETWORK UPGRADE

We have outgrown our 255-address network and need to update our network. On Sunday, December 28, Computer Services will be in the Museum, updating the servers and network routers with new addresses. On Monday, December 29, we will be changing the address of every network-connected computer in the building. You can help, primarily by helping us identify any computers we missed, tucked away in collections areas and private offices.

For those who may wonder, many operations of your computer will continue to work, but some will stop until you get updated. Word processing, local printing, and some applications, like Raiser's Edge, will continue to work. Email, Netscape/Explorer, and some disk sharing will stop until the addresses are changed. You can continue to use your computer before and after the address is changed. We will need to re-start your computer for the new address.

How will this work? On Monday, December 29, when you come in, turn on your computer and start your email (Eudora). Try Netscape/Explorer as well. Some computers are using automatic addressing, so if these applications work, you are ready to go. Sometime during the day, a volunteer or a CS staff member will be around to check or change the address. It takes 2-5 minutes per computer. If your email already works, please let us know or put a note on your keyboard.

We need two types of volunteers. For each department, please provide us with the name and phone extension of a person who can help us find all of the networked computers and printers in that department and help us get through locked doors (email the name to jkoepl@fmnh.org). This volunteer would also gather any startup passwords needed to access departmental computers. Second, if you are technically-minded and would like to be trained to update the computers in your group or department, please email to tkrauskopf@fmnh.org and read <http://intranet1.fmnh.org/newaddresses.htm>.

With several volunteers, the change could be 90% done by noon on Monday. If we do not get all of the computers on December 29, or you have a startup password you need to keep private, no problem. We can get those computers updated as needed. We want you back on the network, so let us know as soon as you are ready to make the switch (x590). Send questions to tkrauskopf@fmnh.org or jkoepl@fmnh.org.

Reminder: If you have a network computer service running (such as a web server or gopher server), please email your service address to jkoepl@fmnh.org so we can plan a smooth transition.

ABOUT TOWN

On December 19-21, "World in a Weekend" at the Chicago Cultural Center (78 East Washington), features the city of Hamburg. -- Submitted by **Fay Levin**



The Holidays Are Coming... and so are the crooks!

It's a time for giving...and a time for taking -

It's a busy time - but even busier for crooks and conmen!

You're filled with the spirit of Goodwill - but don't let your guard down,
when you should be especially alert.

For your own security, and for your family and friends' security,
Please remember:

- ★ Not all delivery men are what they claim to be. Charitable appeals may not be legitimate. You'll see an increase over the holidays. Some of this is a front for crime, used to get into your home or office.
- ★ Be alert for strangers in your building or work area, especially during the times 30 minutes before work, during lunch, or 30 minutes after closing. Crooks look for cover during "people moving" hours.
- ★ Don't leave your wallet or purse out. Lock them in your desk drawer. Don't leave wallets in jackets or coats.
- ★ Don't leave those nice gifts out, or in closets, etc. Lock them in your desk or file cabinet or keep an eye on them at all times until you take them home.
- ★ Don't leave your office unattended, even if you're momentarily absent. Thieves cruise this time of year. They'll steal anything.
- ★ When you place your purchases in your vehicle, lock them in your trunk. In station wagons, conceal gifts by covering them - any way to hide them from view.
- ★ If you bring your packages to your vehicle and plan to return to shop, move to another location. Thieves watch for shoppers who bring packages to their cars and return to the store. If you move your car, they'll think you left.
- ★ Keep your ignition key on a separate key ring. Then parking attendants and others can't open your trunk. If your home or office keys are left with strangers during the day, they could be copied and you could be burglarized while you're away.

*The Security Services Staff Wishes You
A Safe and Happy Holiday!*